

NAME: Rikimaru, Iwasuke DATE OF BIRTH: 1891 PLACE OF BIRTH: Fukuoka-ken
Age: 83 Sex: M Marital Status: M Education: 3 yrs. Agricultural school

PRE-WAR:

Date of arrival in U.S.: 1908 Age: 17 M.S.Y.Y. Port of entry: Victoria
Occupation/s: 1. Schoolboy 2. Farmer 3. Organizer of growers' assn.
Place of residence: 1. Sacramento 2. Livingston 3. Redwood City
Religious affiliation: Christian church
Community organizations/activities: Noyu-Kai, Jikei-Kai, Japanese Ass'n.

EVACUATION:

Name of assembly center: _____
Name of relocation center: Interned at Santa Fe
Dispensation of property: _____ Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. Canteen manager 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: _____
Left camp to go to: _____

POST-WAR:

Date returned to West Coast: 1945
Address/es: 1. San Mateo 2. _____
3. _____
Religious affiliation: Christian church
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: _____

Name of interviewer: Takarabe Date 10/29/75 Place: San Mateo

Translator: Mahel Hall

T: To begin with, please tell me your name.

R: Rikimaru Iwasuke. I was given a Christian name Joseph, so I sign my name as Joseph Iwasuke Rikimaru.

Q: Where were you born?

A: In Fukuoka Prefecture.

Q: When were you born?

A: On December 23, 1891. I am 83 years old now.

Q: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

A: I had 3 brothers and 3 sisters.

Q: Where do you stand among your brothers and sisters?

A: I am the second from the bottom.

Q: What kind of a man was your father?

A: My father was a local leader. He worked as a village master, treasurer and assistant village master. He came from an old farming family which owned much land. He did not work himself but hired people to do the work, and he took care of the village.

Q: Was your father a strict man or a gentle man?

A: He was a gentle man, but when we did anything wrong he was strict.

Q: Was he a religious man?

A: Yes, he was. Our family religion was Shinshu.

Q: What kind of a woman was your mother?

A: She came from a neighboring village. She, too, was from an old family, and she was an ardent Buddhist.

Q: Was she a gentle person?

A: Yes, but she was also strict.

Q: Have you ever been scolded?

A: I seldom quarrelled with anyone, so I don't remember being scolded.

Q: How much education did you have?

A: After graduating from grammar school I attended a county agricultural school as the highschool was too far from our village. I attended the agricultural school for 3 years. Then I came here. That year my older sister married a man who went to Japan looking for a bride, and came to America. His name was Rikimaru. As I was getting tired of the school I had him call me here.

Q: What was your real name?

A: It was Tatsuguchi.

Q: Were you adopted?

A: Yes, I was. They were old and did not have children, so they adopted me, but a child was born after that.

Q: Did you like school in Japan?

A: I didn't particularly like it or dislike it, so it went on smoothly.

Q: Do you remember anything that happened while you were in school?

A: I don't remember anything special. However, I remember I was put in a special class of mentally gifted children before I graduated from the grade school.

Q: What do you remember that was fun?

A: In those days there was nothing especially fun to do except to study and play?

Q: Did you play on the hills?

A: There was a hill in the village, and we went there to gather acorn. My family was old and owned a lot of hills and fields so I went there to pick acorn.

We raised silkworm in our village. As our house was big my mother raised silkworm, so I picked mulberry leaves for silkworm. The property is still there. I went back to Japan about 3 times every 3 to 4 years. My brother is 4 years older than I. He has two sons who have succeeded his work.

Q: Was there a river or a sea near by?

A: Yes, it was near a sea, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles away. There was a branch of a river called Okawa in our village, so I used to play there.

Q: Did you go fishing?

A: Yes. I used to go and catch trout.

Q: How did you catch them, ^{with} by a net or a fishing rod?

A: With a small net.

Q: Did you have fun while you were in the agricultural school?

A: As it was a county school students came from everywhere and I made many new friends. The ^{County Seat} ~~capital~~ of our county was in Togo, and my father was a member of the county assembly. As the school was also in Togo father used to visit there often. That is why I attended the agricultural school.

Q: As your father was a great man he must have treated the children well.

A: He was not a great man, but a leader. so the children were also respected.

Q: Looking back, do you think you have fun in your childhood?

A: Yes. Everytime I went back to Japan I went to the hills and fields where I used to play and recalled the olden days. Many of my friends have already passed away.

Q: What kind of thing do you especially remember?

A: I remember playing on the hills in the back of the house when I was in grammar school. I also remember going to the village office where my father worked and was treated for lunch.

Q: Do you remember any special happenings in the village?

A: When I went back there last time it had become a town combined with a few other villages.

Q: Were there such thing as the rice riot in your village?

A: No, nothing like that happened. I think the rice riot happened after I came to America. As my father was a landlord the tenant farmers brought bags of rice as land rent. There was a place under the front room to store rice.

Q: Did you have fun at New Years?

A: Villagers used to get together and played baseball with children.

Q: Did you have good things to eat?

A: In farmers' house they used to eat millet, wheat mixed with rice or just white rice. In our family we ate white rice, or rice mixed with wheat as it was good for the health. Poor people used to eat millet, but not in our family.

Q: Were there maids and servants in your family?

A: When I was little we had maids and servants. I remember taken to places on the maid's back. The servant pulled weeds in the field.

Q: Was there any war?

A: I heard about the Sino-Japanese War from my father, especially about the seige of a castle in Botandai.

Q: What kind of thing did he tell you?

A: I forgot. ^{I heard} Mr. Onodera's grandfather led the troops in attacking the castle. My father used to tell me such stories after supper. My uncle (mother's brother) knew a lot about history, and when he came to visit us he used to tell me stories about ^{such people as} Takeda Shingen, Nobunaga and Ishida Mitsunari.

Q: Did you like to hear those stories?

A: Yes, I listened well.

Q: Did you have ethics at school?

A: It was an important subject in olden days. We used to learn moral lessons from the biographies of great people. One teacher encouraged us to save money. He taught us not to spend even a penny on useless thing, but to spend as much money as we can for a useful purpose. He was a good teacher of ethics.

Q: We don't have ethics now, but do you think we should have it?

A: I think we should have it.

Q: What kind of story do you remember?

A: I remember about Takayama, Hikokuro who was loyal to the Emperor. He used to worship the Emperor from the Sanjo Bridge in Kyoto every morning.

Q: What other story do you remember?

A: In olden days there were rebels against the Emperor. At one time they put the Emperor in a prison. Takayama Hikokuro pasted by a window a Chinese poem which meant that he was coming to rescue the Emperor. so don't be discouraged.

Q: Did you learn about Ninomiya, Sontoku?

A: I learned a lot about him as he was a reformer of farm villages. As he was a representative of Japanese farmers we learned about him in the ethics without fail.

Q: Did you learn about Japanese myth?

A: Yes. Amaterasu Okami is supposed to have descended to Kyushu. I think the ancestor of the Emperor came from the Continent, and ⁿconquering Kumaso who were the natives went to Kyoto and ascended to the throne.

Q: How do you interpret the myth?

A: In those days I didn't think it as a myth, but as a story of olden days. I thought it was the story of not gods but people who built our country.

Q: Did you think that way from the beginning?

A: I did not take it that way when I heard it, but later I came to interpret that way.

Q: When you learned it at school did you accept it that way?

A: Yes, I accepted it as I was taught.

Q: What about the hare and the tortoise?

A: I forgot what it was about.

Q: Did you think Japanese schools were good compared to schools here?

A: Yes, I think it was good. After I came here I attended a high-school at night. Then I attended a business college before I began my career.

Q: How old were you when you came to America?

A: I was about 17 years old.

Q: How did you happen to come here?

A: My older sister got married and came here, so I had them send for me.

Q: Did you want to come to America?

A: I didn't have such desire at that time. I came here because my sister told me to come here.

Q: What kind of a country did you think America was?

A: I learned about Admiral Perry in the history, but I had a vague idea about America.

Q: Did you think America was a nice Country?

A: Yes, I did. It started importing Occidental culture to Japan. Chinese culture came to Japan through Korea.

Q: Where did the ship leave from?

A: From Yokohama.

Q: Do you remember anything about the ship?

A: I was a third class passenger, so I was in the lower part of the ship.

Q: Did you get seasick?

A: Only one day. After that I got used to it. In those days we could not come straight to America. We came through Victoria and landed at Vancouver. Then we came to San Francisco by a ship.

Q: What year was it? Was it around 1917?

A: I was here when they had the Exhibition in 1915. Around 1915 I was a student in Sacramento.

Q: What kind of people were on board the ship when you came?

A: They were immigrants who came here to work. I was yobiyose so I was ~~was~~ treated differently.

Q: Were there any picture brides?

A: That was much later.

Q: Did you come here before or after the San Francisco earthquake?

A: It was a litte after the earthquake.

Q: How did you feel when you arrived Victoria?

A: I thought it was a fine city. In those days some parts of the streets were paved, and some parts were not paved.

Q: About how many days did you stay at Victoria?

A: I think I stayed there 2 or 3 nights. Then I went to Vancouver.

Q: Where did you stay?

A: I ~~stayed~~ stayed at a hotel.

Q: Was it a Japanese hotel?

A: I think it was. I stayed at a Japanese hotel in Vancouver, too.

Q: How did you go from the ship to the hotel?

A: By a carriage.

Q: How could you tell the driver where you wanted to go?

A: I had a note that showed where I wanted to go.

Q: Did you know the name of the hotel or did you ask someone?

A: I think there were some Japanese.

Q: How did you feel when you stay there for 3 days?

A: I thought it was a lot different from Japan. I was impressed by the spaciousness in Canada and in America.

Q: Did you come to Vancouver by a ship?

A: Yes. Then I went to Victoria by a ferry. From there I went to Vancouver and came to San Francisco by a ship.

Q: How was San Francisco?

A: It was after the great earthquake and there were ruins as far as I could see. A carriage took me a Japanese hotel through the ruin.

Q: About how many days did you stay there?

A: About 2 to 3 days. Then my step-father came from Sacramento to pick me up, so I went to Sacramento with him. My sister was there. My step father was growing grape and strawberry.

Q: Whereabout in Sacramento was it?

A: It was near Florin Road. I went to a grammar school there.

I was quite big for a pupil, so the teacher helped me. I used to get up around 2 o'clock in the morning and brushed the ~~horses~~^{horses} and got them ready to be harnessed before I had breakfast. The horses had to be fed well as they worked all day.

Q: It was hard, wasn't it?

A: As I was young I didn't think it was hard. After that I went to school.

Q: Did you like school?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Have you taken care of horses in Japan?

A: We had cows but no horses. The servants did that kind of work at home, so I have never done it before.

Q: Did you think you came to an awful place?

A: I thought it was fun.

Q: What time was the school over?

A: At 3 o'clock.

Q: What time did it start?

A: At 9 o'clock. I worked before school and after school.

After I got older I quit that school and went to a school in town. As I got older I went to the market to sell strawberry.

Q: About what time did you go to bed at night?

A: I went to bed after supper, about 7 or 8 o'clock. When we were young we worked hard without complaining.

Q: Did American children kid you when you went to school?

A: They were kind to me. It was in the village, not in town, so people were friendlier. I made friends even though I could not speak English well.

Q: Where did you go after you graduated from the grade school?

A: As I was young my foster father was afraid I learn bad things, so he put me under the care of a pastor of a Methodist church in Sacramento. In winter I stayed at church and attended a night school.

Q: Which school did you go to?

A: Night department of a high school in Sacramento.

Q: How long did you continue that kind of life?

A: By and by I taught Sunday School at church. On weekdays I worked, but on Saturday I came to my room and studied Bible under the pastor. With that material I taught Sunday School. I served as a principal of Sunday School for a long time.

Q: About how long did you live in Sacramento?

A: Until 1941. My job was to take the strawberry from my foster father's ranch to the market and sell them. The buyers used to knock down the price, so I established a strawberry growers' association, and started to ship the strawberry to the East.

Q: Around what year was this?

A: I don't remember well.

Q: Was it before or after the Depression?

A: It was before the Depression.

Q: Were you in Sacramento until the war broke out?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: Where was the market?

A: On I Street in Sacramento, between the 3rd and the 4th Avenues.

Q: Did only Japanese go there?

A: People from different countries gathered there.

Q: Was it mostly Japanese who brought strawberry?

A: Yes, they were. There were strawberry and raspberry. I became friends with wholesale dealers, so I gathered the produce of those who could not sell, and asked them to sell the produce.

I liked to help people. Later, when the war broke out we had to be registered. I didn't want to go to war, but I said I would help, and I helped Japanese register at the county office.

Q: What were you doing when you were around 20 years old?

A: I was helping my foster father. I never had a business of my own as I had an idea that it was a shame to work for myself. I tried to work for the society. I did not have that kind of an idea at first, but I gradually came to think that way.

Q: What were you doing during the Depresssion?

A: I had moved from Sacramento to Livingston, and was working for the Grape Growers' Association and the Fruit Growers' Association. I also helped the Egg Plant Growers' Association in Cortez.

Q: When did you move to Livingston?

A: Before the Depression.

Q: Did you move to Livingston?

A: I took my family there. As Livingston was out in the country and inconvenient we rented a house in Turlock, and I commuted to Livingston. Our children went to school in Turlock.

Q: When did you get married?

A: In 1921.

Q: How did you get married?

When

A: [^]I went back to Japan my family found a bride for me.

Q: Did you have a marriage meeting?

A: We did not have such a thing.

Q: Did they find a bride for you and were waiting for you?

A: No. My oldest brother was a political leader in the district.

I think he stayed at my wife's home when he went to Hakata.

My older brother was active in politics. He was a member of Seiyu Kai.

Q: What kind of difficulties did you have in organizing a strawberry growers' association in Florin?

A: If each farmer sell his own crop at the market he does not make much profit, so we decided that all the farmers get together and set a price and sell the crops to the buyers. We took a strong attitude that if the buyers do not buy we would ship the produce to the East. The buyers agreed with us and everything went on smoothly.

After that I went to Cortez and organized the Grape Growers' Association and the Strawberry Growers' Association, and the associations sold the produce. Farmers in Cortez used to consign the produce to the market in San Francisco. When I went there I found out that the price they sold the produce was different from the price on the report that came to the union. After investigating I found out that someone in the middle was making profit. Since I went to the market and watched it was better. We only shipped to buyers who paid good price. Sometimes I stayed at a hotel and checked the market in the morning. It was very effective.

Q: When you organized the Strawberry Growers' Association in Sacramento were the Issei farmers very cooperative?

A: They knew my personality, so we came to an agreement. Only 2 or 3 people did not join the association because of location but they did not do well. Later the growers got together and sent an express car to the East. The market was ensured.

Q: Did it become your job?

A: Yes, it did.

Q: What was the name of the ^{growers} association in Sacramento?

A: It was Sacramento Valley Berry Growers' Association.

Q: Did you name it?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: About how many members were there?

A: About 20 to 30 members.

Q: Do you have a record?

A: No, I don't.

Q: About how much sale did you have?

A: It was not much, as things were cheap in those days.

Q: Did some poor farmers borrow money from some companies in those days?

A: Yes, some people had to give all their profit to those companies. I negotiated directly with banks and had them borrow from banks. Kikuno Kumiai which I organized in 1931 was one of them. Matsuoka, Ryosaku who came to America after graduating from the Agricultural University of Sapporo was an agricultural expert in the farmers' Association and was taking care of growers. The members of Kikuno Kumiai asked Mr. Matsuoka to call me from ^{on} Livingston. People in Livingston did not want me leave, but they had the market, and everything was settled. When people first developed Livingston they borrowed money from the Mortgage Guarantee Company, and were

paying much interest. I made a list of names and smount of money borrowed. I set aside some money the Co-op Society which I later renamed the Growers Association made from the sale of grape, and paid off the mortgage in 3 to 4 years. I also got a loan from Yokohama Specie Bank and paid off the loan. Since then their economic strength changed completely. Therefore I have a close relationship with Yokohama Specie Bank.

At the time I organized Kikuno Kumiai, the shippers put out the money and they set their own price. The growers could not sever relationship with shippers unless they had about \$30,000. I borrowed \$30,000 from the Specie Bank and paid off the shippers so that any grower could sell freely. Had I done that without consulting anybody, there could have been some trouble. Therefore I gathered the shippers and groers together and let them shake hands as partners. Since then the shippers bought crops with the price the growers wanted to sell, and everything went on smoothly.

Q: Who put the money out, for instance in Florin?

A: The shippers did. Nojiri was one of them who took crops and shipped them out. I paid them off and set the growers free.

Q: I heard that some strawberry growers borrowed money from some companies, and after they harvested crops they paid the companies and kept what was left over. What kind of companies did they borrow money from? Was Nojiri one of them?

A: Yes, in those days.

Q: Did they borrow money from the white companies?

A: There were some white companies.

Q: Was Wells Fargo one of them?

A: No, there was no relationship with Wells Fargo Bank in those days.

Q: After the clean-up, did they become an association?

A: Yes, they did.

T: It must have been a job.

R: Yes, but I did it with sincerity so it went on smoothly. I did not take anything except my salary. My salary was the lowest. I worked with the lowest salary for over 30 years, so they still give me pension. In those days people in my position could have been paid over \$1,000 a month, but I only received \$550, and used my own car and gasoline. I never asked for a raise during 30 some years.

Q: You organized an association in Livingston around 1920. Then you helped organize an association in Cortez. How long did you stay there?

A: I came here in 1931, so I think I stayed there 7 to 8 years.

Q: Where did you go after that?

A: I established Kiku Kumiai here in October, 1930, as the growers could not make a living.

Q: Who were the shippers?

A: Most of them were the white people. The growers did not know how to sell their crops, so they had to sell them to the wholesale dealers.

At one time there was such an instance. In New Orleans there is a custom of taking big chrysanthemum to graves on the All Saints Day. There were some people who grew many chrysanthemum for this once a year occasion. I told them to quit such risky business, but to grow chrysanthemum they could sell everyday.

There is another thing. Chrysanthemum grow from mid-September to October. As the season is so short, the income of the growers was very little. If they had bad crops the family had to suffer all year round. Therefore I told them to grow tulip and sweetpea while they had time in Spring, and live on them until chrysanthemum came out. Until then they had income only after September, but if they planted sweetpea early in Spring, they could have two crops before chrysanthemum came out. They were growing only 2 or 3 kinds of chrysanthemum, so I made them grow more varieties, and also small mums. Since then they had income from sweetpea, tulip, mums and chrysanthemum all year round.

As chrysanthemum bloom only in autumn, I made a research to see if we could make chrysanthemum grow all the year round. I

thought that in order to make the weather similar to Autumn we should make the room dark. A man named Watanabe in Auburn wanted to experiment with me. We built a 10ft by 10ft room. We could not afford black satin, so we bought black paper and covered the room, but when the wind blew the paper was torn. Then we bought canvas and died it black, but when it rained the color ran. We finally bought black cloth and used it. It did not tear, and we could use it again the following year. Since then we used it every year.

Q: Did it succeed?

A: Yes, it did. In those days it was outside, so the cloth was faded in 2 to 3 years. Nowadays they do it in greenhouse so there is no problem. We started little at a time, but by the time we evacuated all was done that way. We used it when we came back after the war, so we could manage to live when things were not good.

Q: Were you in Livingston during the Depression?

A: I came here in 1931. They called me here because the business was not good and they could not make a living.

Q: Did everybody have a hard time then?

A: Of course. Some people did not have money to buy rice. Some people called me at my office and asked for help as they did not have money to pay PG&E. I went to the banks and PG&E and took care of them.

Q: Were they individuals?

A: They were the members. The other day when I was invited to the opening of a Wells Fargo Bank, I talked about those days. Until I went there the banks did not loan money to growers as they thought growing flowers was too risky. I borrowed \$30,000 from Yokohama Specie Bank and paid off all the debts and established the association. As Japanese became better in management, I thought we should have good relationship with local banks. In those days there was a nice man named Mr. Morris at Wells Fargo Bank. He knew the way I did things, so he loaned us money when I called him on the phone. I paid off bank loans before any other loans, so I ~~earned~~ earned good credit. Since then we had good relationship with Wells Fargo Bank. After we evacuated, the bank looked after the vacant buildings and offices. When I came back I went to the bank and thanked them, and they were glad to see me back.

Q: Did the bank look after the individual's greenhouses?

A: There was no greenhouse in those days. They were built after we came back. They watched my office building, too, as I left the keys with them. Everything went on well. That is why Redwood City still has good relationship with Japanese. Of course it is the age of the second and third generations now.

Q: Was the Flower Growers' Association in Redwood City?

A: Yes, it was, but it was moved to Palo Alto later. At Palo Alto, also, people were worried, but I bought a lot and built an office of the association. There were 2 or 3 lots next to it, so I bought them and built an office and a warehouse. When I retired in 1968 I built houses for rent, so we have good income from them now.

Q: Going back to Depression, were there people who could not make a living?

A: I bought rice and gave to some people.

Q: What was your job title?

A general manager

A: ~~An executive~~ of the association, but I helped the community in San Francisco a lot.

Q: What did you do?

A: I erected the monument of ^{Kanrinman} . I also planted cherry trees in the Golden Gate Park from behind Japanese Tea Garden to the Hall of Flowers. The seeds were collected by Japanese children and were brought here by a Dietman. I took them home and had people seed them in a greenhouse. When they sapplings became big enough I planted them in the back of Japanese Tea Garden.

Q: When was it? Was it before the war?

A: I forgot, but I think it was after the war.

Q: Were you worried when the atmosphere between Japan and America became bad around 1940?

A: Yes, I was. I remember a ship which came from Japan could not come into the harbor, so it was anchored offshore. We evacuated when the war broke out. People of Redwood City did not have any ill feeling towards Japanese. On the contrary, they were very sympathetic towards us. I left the keys to my office with them. When I came back they were glad to see me back, and visited me. People around there did not have any ill feelings towards us even after the war.

Q: What was the most difficult thing you did in Florin?

A: The income was small, so we had to get good price for the crops. Since that time I encouraged people to buy land.

Q: They couldn't buy land then, couldn't they?

A: No, they couldn't, but a couple of people bought land.

Q: Did they buy land in their children's name?

A: I was worried about it when I was in Livingston. I consulted with Mr. Calden, a lawyer who had his office in San Francisco, and decided to establish corporations which would not contradict the Alien Land Law. Since then everybody started establishing corporations.

Q: Did any white man give you a hard time in those days?

A: No, I never had such an experience.

Q: Were there many old Isseis when you came here?

A: Most of them came here to make money, so many of them had gone back home.

Q: Did many go back to Japan?

A: Yes, they did.

Q: Were there many single Isseis?

A: Yes, there were/

Q: Do you know many single Isseis who lost money in gambling?

A: I do not know such people as I was in the country, and those people gambled in town. In olden days many Japanese worked in hops ranch in Sacramento. I heard that people gambled in camps.

Q: Were there many single men who came to work in the country with blankets on their shoulders?

A: Yes, there were.

Q: Didn't those people gamble?

A: As you know, Livingston was built by Mr. Akiko as a Christian village, so there were no such people.

T: Japanese people are not good at organization.

R: That's true, because they say selfish things.

T: Japanese partners do not get along well.

R: I know that. That is why I advise people not to have partners/
Corporation will work as they are shareholders. I tell them to
be independent.

Q: Why don't Japanese partners get along well?

A: Because each individual has strong ego/

T: I think Chinese are better in that respect/

R: Chinese are broad-minded, but Japanese are narrow-minded, and
try to compete with each other. That is why I tell my brother
not to sell the land and live leisurely in wide space.

Q: Did you like your job as an organizer?

A: I think it is good that everybody do things together instead
of doing it individually.

Q: I admire you for getting an idea about organizing an association
when you went to sell strawberry.

A: It was from my experience. Some people could not sell all their
produce, so I thought they should all get together and sell.

T: I think not many people notice such thing. You must have special talents.

R: I don't have special talents, but I sympathize with other people. That is why I do not have a profession of my own.

Q: How many children do you have?

A: Two sons and three daughters. One is an architect in St. Louis. He has a \$4 million contract to build offices for Arizona State and a city.

Q: Are all your daughters here?

A: Yes, they are all married here.

Q: About how many families joined the association in Livingston?

A: I think there were over 20 families. Mr. Abiko started the Yamato Colony there.

Q: How about Cortez?

A: It was the second colony. As Japanese succeeded, some white people started developing between Livingston and Cortez, but they failed.

T: I heard neither Livingston nor Cortez had good soil.

R: It was sandy soil.

Q: About how many years did you live in the Methodist church?

A: I was a student then. I think I lived there 3 to 4 years.

On weekends I came from the country and received lectures on Bible from the pastor. The pastor was Rev. Morizo Yoshida then. Later I taught Sunday School, and even preached a sermon when the pastor was away. In those days I went to the corner ^{3rd and} of L Street and held the roadside mission. We went out around 6 P.M. and held the roadside mission until time to come back to church for Kyorei-Kai at 8 P.M.

Q: What was Kyorei-Kai?

A: It was a meeting of young men to encourage each other.

B: Before I came, farmers were leasing land, but I made them buy land so that it would not be a temporary place/

Q: Did you have an intention of settling down there permanently?

A: Of course.

Q: You didn't have any intention of going back to Japan?

A: I might have had such intention, but I was too busy to do so.

Q: Were you glad to see the Emperor when he visited here?

A: Yes, I was. When I was young Emperor came to Kyushu for maneuvers. We went to greet him at the station, but we had to hold our heads down, and were not allowed to look up/

Q: Did you receive any medal?

A: Yes, I did twice.

Q: What did you receive?

A: At first I received the Fifth Order of Merit. Then I received the Fourth Order of Merit. I took care of the Noyu-Kai (Farmers' Friends Association).

Q: Was it from before the war?

A: I think it was after the war.

Q: What kind of an association is Noyu-Kai?

A: Japanese government sent agricultural students from different prefectures to America. I took care of them after they came here. They stayed at the Y.M.C.A. and after a year they left from the airport. I organized a supporters' association and gave them farewell parties.

Q: How many times a year did you hold the farewell party?

A: Once a year. They came around April and went back to Japan around February. At that time we treated them to dinner ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ China Town.

Q: What other work did you do in the Japanese community?

A: I took care of the Jikei-Kai. Originally it was an association to help single men who led dissipated life and could not go back to Japan ~~even~~ if they wanted to. At my time it helped single men who could not make a living.

Q: Was it before the war?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: Does it still exist?

A: Yes, it does. We do not have such cases now, so we devote ourselves to the management of a cemetery. We built a nice mausoleum and take care of it.

Q: Are you the president of the association?

A: Yes, I am. I have been doing it since around 1960.

Q: About how many members are there?

A: I think there are 70 to 80 members who pay the operating cost.

Q: What else do you do? What about the Nikkeijin-Kai?

A: I am a director of it now. I worked before, but young people do the work now. It is called the Nichi-Bei Kai.

Q: Are the Nichi-Bei Kai and the Nikkeijin Kai separate organizations?

A: The Nichi-Bei Kai is also called the Nikkeijin Kai. They are the same organization.

Q: What kind of work does the Nichi-Bei Kai perform?

A: We give farewell parties to Japanese who go back to Japan, or take care of such occasions as the Emperor's visit here.

Q: What about the Kenjin Kai? (Association of the people from the same prefecture)

A: I belong to a Kenjin Kai, but I have an opinion that we should not form such small organizations as kenjin kai after coming all the way to America. People of my kenjin kai wanted to get together and talk sometimes, so I joined it, but I am not too active in it.

Q: Did the white churches have good-will towards Japanese?

A: Yes, they did. The superintendent of the Presbyterian Church in San Mateo was a white man, but others were Japanese. I had much contact with the white people, but I hardly ever felt the feeling of exclusion.

Q: You could speak English, but isn't it true that some Japanese were excluded?

A: I think there was strong exclusion around San Francisco. When I came here and organized the Chrysanthemum Association there were some exclusion and struggle, but they were settled soon after I came here. I think the exclusion of Japanese was the strongest around 1913.

Q: Randolph Hearst was very anti-Japanese wasn't he?

A: Yes, he was. ^{McCLATCHY} MacLarti of Sacramento used Japanese exclusion as his policy, but he had a Japanese houseboy. A member of my church Mr. Kato lived in his house as a houseboy, but he was treated well.

Q: Didn't you think about becoming a pastor?

A: I thought about it, but I did not have enough education, and I had to go to a seminary. I thought I would do the same kind of work as a pastor by working for the growers and help the development of agriculture. Everybody thought I would become a pastor as I spent most of my time in church. Every Sunday I preached at the corner of 3rd. and L Street for an hour to an hour and a half. Then I went back to church and led the Kyoyu-Kai.

Q: What kind of thing did you talk about?

A: Repentance of sins. Some people did such and such things but they failed. You shouldn't do such wrong doings. Christianity teaches such and such things, so come to Christianity.

Q: What kind of audience did you have?

A: Passers-by stopped and listened.

Q: Were they Issei men?

A: Yes, they were men and women. After I returned to church I gathered young men and held Kyorei-Kai before the sermon.

T: I think it was hard to gather farmers who were independent.

R: Before I went to Livingston the growers packed their own produce at home and took them to the packing house and sold them. Then the people who bought them shipped the produce. There were complaints that the produce were mixed and the reputation at the

market was bad. Therefore I had the growers bring the produce to the packing shed and had them pack their produce there. I put a supervisor on each ~~s~~³ection and did uniformed packing. I had a refrigeration car ready in the back, and had the boxes loaded in the car and shipped them directly to markets in Chicago, New York and Boston. We had a very good result.

Q: Where did you get those ideas?

A: I worked it out myself.

T: I am surprised at your elaborate iedeas.

R: I did the same at Cortez. I signed a contract with a trucking company and had them ship the produce to the market in San Francisco. I put brand names such as the "Rising Sun" on the produce. It received good reputation at the market and sold good. When I am in charge of something, I study and think of new direction we can advance in.

Q: Were most of the farmers older than you when you were in Livingston or in Redwood City?

A: Many of them were about the same age as I was. There were some older men, but they were stubborn and did not listen to me. Young men had to follow me. When I came to Redwodd City, farmers were leasing the land, so I bought 50 acres. I had a road built in the middle of it and had a gas pipe installed by PG&E so that each family could get gas from the main pipe. As for electricity

I had electric poles put up and had electricity installed. That is why the place developed fast. I had a big road built in the middle, and divided the land on both sides of it into lots and had people buy the lots. They are still there.

Q: Were the people who bought the lots growers?

A: Yes, they were. Their children are there now.

Q: Did they grow flowers there?

A: Yes, they did. I had them grow flowers all the year round. If they use the same soil all the time they get germ in the soil, so I had them steam the soil. That is why they can use the same soil for many years. After they became financially well off, I made them build greenhouses. The reason why the greenhouse does not take much space is because if they build 100 feet by 200 feet greenhouse they can start growing flowers in one section and then go to the next section and grow flowers in turn. The soil is steamed so they can be used for many years. That is why 50 acres was enough.

Q: Was it a good policy to have started a ^{business} relationship with the Wells Fargo Bank?

A: Yes. We had business with Yokohama Specie Bank at first, but it was too far away. In those days Americans did not lend money to Japanese, either. There was a good president at the Wells Fargo Bank then, so I went to see him and started ^{doing business} a ~~relationship~~. People in those days have passed away, but there is a man who has been a vice-president since 1935.

Q: Did you do business with the Bank of America?

A: No, we did all the business with the Wells Fargo Bank.

Q: Was the service of the Wells Fargo Bank good?

A: Yes, it was good. I am on the advisory board of the Bank of Tokyo and I hold their stock, but I do not do business with them. When we do business with one bank for 30 to 40 years we do not want to change banks.

Q: What other work do you do?

A: My main work is with the associations. When Dai Nihon Nokai (Great Japanese Agricultural Society) gives commendations to people who have rendered distinguished service to agriculture, I write to people I know in the local districts and ask them to recommend some people who have rendered distinguished service. After I get the names of the people I write true and detailed personal history of those people and recommend them to the headquarter. That is why most people I recommend receive commendations.

Q: Are you the president of the Society?

A: I have been the president of a branch of Dai Nippon Nokai for a long time. Two presidents of the headquarter have passed away since I accepted this position.

Q: Where is the headquarter?

A: It is in Tokyo. Prince Takamatsu is the president. We hold the commendation ceremony at the Japanese consulate. Mr. Keizo Koda started this, but he passed away in a year or two after he started it. As I had been helping him I took over the work after he died. The letters of commendation were sent from Japan, but if they were sent to individuals the custom questioned them, so we had them sent to the consulate general, and the ceremony was held there. If the president was not a prince we could not have done so. That is why the people in local districts regarded it an honor to be commended by the Dai Nippon Nokai, and that is why there is a strict selection of candidates. I let the people in local districts to be responsible in selecting the candidates. The selection is not taken lightly, so we need detailed personal history. I look mostly for Isseis as candidates, but there are very few Isseis left, so little by little Niseis who are almost 60 years old are becoming the candidates. I was looking for people 70 years or older but there are very few such people, so we pick Niseis who are almost 70 years old. We have to be careful not to select young people who can still work. After they become 70 years old we do not have to worry about such thing. If the personal history is not very clear, we investigate it and make sure that it can be approved by the headquarter. Four people were selected this year. Some years we have up to ten people.

Q: When was it started?

A: It was started in Southern California first.

Q: Was it started around 1920?

A: Not so long ago.

Q: Was it around 1930?

A: Oh yes, it was around 1920.

Q: Were you a member of the Heimusha-Kai (Soldiers' Association)?

A: Yes, I was the organizer, so I was interned the night the war broke out.

Q: What was the purpose of the Heimusha-Kai?

A: Mr. Susumu Inouye of Redwood City was the president for a long time. The purpose of the Society was to serve the country even though we passed the draft age as we left Japan before the draft age and did not perform our duty to the country. That is why we were arrested as pro-Japanese as soon as the war broke out.

Q: How do you write Heimusha?

A: "Hei" for soldiers. "Mu" for duty and "sha" for person.

We raised much money.

Q: How much did you raise?

A: We raised tens of thousand dollars.

R: When I was brought up in Meiji era I was taught to do good in private. After I became a Christian I learned that we should not let our left hand know what our right hand is doing, so I did not tell anybody what I did.

T: But this is different. I want the young people to know what the Isseis did, so I want you to tell us everything.

R: As I told you before, it was important that I established corporations in Livingston and overcame feeling.

Q: Wasn't it challenged after the war?

A: There were such problems once in a while, That is why I bought the land here, not as an individual but as a corporation. A lawyer named Mr. Carlden agreed that the individual may be Japanese, but the corporation is American.

Q: Did the case go to the Supreme Court?

A: No, it didn't have to as it was clear. There was a lawsuit in Petaluma concerning the ownership of land, but I thought my way was better. In those days many Japanese bought land in their children's names, but I established a corporation instead.

Q: Did the people who bought land in their children's names have problems?

A: Yes. I established a corporation instead. This is not against the law or phoney.

Q: Were you here when the war broke out?

A: Yes.

Q: So you don't know what happened in Livingston after you left, don't you? I heard that some people in Livingston left their corporations in care of Mr. Momberg when they evacuated.

A: My lawyer Mr. Carlden organized the corporation for me.

Q: Did Mr. Carlden take care of your corporation while you were away?

A: There was a good man who did that.

Q: Was it Mr. Momberg?

A: No. I forgot his name, but he was a lawyer and he took care of my corporation while I was away.

Q: Did you work for J.A.C.L. for a long time?

A: No, I only helped from outside.

Q: Are you a member?

A: Yes, I am. I supported it long time before the new building was built.

Q: Is J.A.C.L. young peoples' organization?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you think danger will come to Japanese?

A: No, I didn't think so. It was ~~a~~ war between countries, so I didn't think there will be danger to individuals.

Q: When did the F.B.I. come and get you?

A: That night I was taken to a government office. I was given a blanket and stayed there overnight. The next day I ~~was~~ taken to the Immigration office in San Francisco.

Q: What happened then?

A: I stayed there for about a week. Then I was taken to an intern-ment camp by a train which had shades pulled down over the win-dows.

Q: Where was the camp?

A: It was Topaz in Utah.

Q: What happenēd to your work?

A: I had to leave it behind. I was separated from my family. I received a letter that they were evacuated in May.

Q: Weren't you worried as you were taken away suddenly?

A: I was not worried too much. I didn't think Americas would be too rough.

Q: Weren't you worried about your work and your family?

A: I was called in front of a judge in the court about four time and was questioned where I went and what I did. I heard later that someone had tailed me when I visited the homes of those who were taken away and comforted their families. I was the last one to be taken away. It happened to be the day of my oldest daughter's wedding. The mayor felt sorry for me and wanted them to wait till after the wedding to take me away, but it was government's order so they could not wait and took me away.

Q: Was the wedding held?

A: It was held later. Only I was taken, not my family. I spent a night at a police station, and was taken to the Immigration office the next day. I stayed there with Italians and Germans.

Q: How long did you stay in ~~in~~Topaz?

A: As I played golf I had a few golf sticks sent from home.

I made green in the desert and played golf. I became friendly with Mr. Johnson, the head of the camp, and played golf with him. Even while I was in internment camp I was allowed to take a few people to a golf course in Santa Fe and play golf.

Q: Were you in Santa Fe then?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: Did you work in the camp?

A: As I was a businessman I worked as a manager of the canteen/
I heard later that Mr. Johnson's brother was in Japan during
the war, and was detained in Kobe. When some people went back
to Japan I sent a letter to Mr. Johnson's brother. That is why
Mr. Johnson was friendly with me. I think in Japan also they
detained Americans who were there on business.

Q: Did all the people interned in Santa Fe behave themselves?

A: Yes. Santa Fe camp was going to be closed, so we were sent to
a camp in Arizona. Santa Fe camp used to be a C.C. camp where
the government gave job training to young people. It was vacant
so we were put there. As I was in business I was asked to be a
manager of the canteen. That is why I didn't feel like being
interned. I could go out to town anytime, so I used to take a
few people with me to town and bought some Indian goods.

We used to go in the valley in autumn to watch crimson foliage.
They were beautiful/ We had quite a bit of freedom. Anytime
we wanted to go out we tell the office and they opened the gate
for us. I did not go out alone. I used to take 4 to 5 people
with me. We went out to play golf, also.

Q: Did other people work?

A: Everybody did something for exercise. As Japanese are good at
growing vegetables, some people grew vegetables.

That was a temporary camp. Then we were transferred to a camp in Arizona. We went there in Spring and stayed there till around Christmas. After about a year the war was reaching a low point so they started to let Japanese go free. As my family was back home they told me I could go home, so I came home by train. The man who came back with me had a business in San Francisco, but he passed away later. We went to Denver, where we stayed at my friends for two nights, and then we came home.

Q: Did anything special happen in internment camps?

A: I think it was in Arizona. One of the men I was playing golf with shot his ball outside the fence. When he went to pick up the ball a guard on the watch tower shot at him thinking he was going to escape. Fortunately he was not hit. I shouted "Abunai" (Watch out). When I showed the ball and told the guard that he went to pick up the ball he said it was all right. I was surprised. If he had been hit, it would have been a serious thing. It was good that I could play golf everywhere I went to. Sometimes I played golf with the heads of camps.

Q: Did you think it was unfair that you were put in internment camp?

A: I thought so, but when I asked the judge who questioned me why they intern Japanese who lived in America for a long time just because the war broke out, he told me that Japanese might guide Japanese soldiers if they land here as San Mateo is close to the bay. The other reason was to protect Japanese .

I was called in front of judges 2 or 3 times because I was a member of the Heimusha-Kai. They asked me why I organized such an association. I replied, "You are an American, so I think you want to be loyal to your country in order to defend your country. I think the same way for my country. As I am a Japanese I want to be on Japan's side when we are in war." I was not defiant, so they said, "All right." The real purpose of the Heimusha-Kai was to fulfill our duty to our country and not to oppose America.

Q: Were you sorry you missed your daughter's wedding?

A: I didn't feel that way/

Q: Did you think this kind of thing will happen?

A: I thought I could not do anything but to leave the matter to take its own course. I never thought others were wrong as I thought each person made decision on his own point of view. I was never defiant. I did not blame people for taking me away. When I was taken away I did not think I could come home. But I was treated well as there is an international treaty and American government did not want to violate it. Spanish (Swiss ?) consulate used to visit us and checked our food and living quarters. I think they reported how Americans government treated Japanese. If they had violated the treaty, other countries would have advised American government.

Q: What kind of people were in the camp?

A: They were all leaders of communities. There were many people from Los Angeles.

Q: There were many radicals in Tule Lake. Were there such people in your camp?

A: They are different. When they entered the camp they signed a paper that they wanted to go back to Japan. When we were questioned we did not say such thing. We had families, so we did not mention about Japan. In Tule Lake there were many young members of the Heimusha-Kai who wanted to go back to Japan. From American point of view I think they were dangerous pro-Japanese.

Q: Did you have unpleasant feeling in the camp?

A: At first I felt strange to stand in a line at mess hall. When I went to Santa Fe I found out that all the Buddhists priests were interned. There were many from Southern California.

Q: What do you think was the reason?

A: I think as Buddhism was Japanese religion they are more pro-Japanese and taught pro-Japanese ideas.

Later I found out that I was listed as an Army 2nd lieutenant because they found in my house a cap which had two white stripes which I wore when I was a student of an agricultural school.

Q: I heard some Japanese in other camps listened to Japanese news on short wave radios. Were there such people in your camp?

A: I heard that some people listened to shortwave radios, but I never actually saw them.

T: I think some people made them and took them to the camp.

R: I think so, too, because there were some news on Japan in the "Camp News". Probably some people heard it over the radios.

Q: Was it in Japanese?

A: In Japanese. Some newspapermen published the "Camp News". Also there was a library where there were books sent from churches and other places, and people who had leisure time used to go there and read the books.

There were Japanese pastors and they held worship services on Sundays. They were questioned, also, but as they were Christians and did not propagate pro-Japanese ideas there were no problems. There was one young theological seminary student who was ready to graduate. He received a notice in camp that he could graduate from the seminary and could be ordained. Then we gathered in the office, and a bishop from Santa Fe ordained him.

Q: Do you remember his name?

A: I don't remember.

Q: Is there anything else you recollect that happened in Santa Fe or in Arizona?

A:

Q: Was the food good?

A: As I said before the Spanish (Swiss?) came to inspect, so it was good. Mr. Mihara who received the Second Order of Merit in Seattle recently was a leader in our camp. When we met the other day we talked about the good time we had together. When the Emperor visited here recently he was here. He received the Second Order of Merit, Mr. Asano of the Nichi-Bei Times was awarded the Third Order of Merit and I recieved the Fourth Order of Merit. I wish we had a picture taken together with the Emperor.

That was the story of my life. All my life I had never put myself in the center. I always wanted to serve the public. That is why I did not have a business of my own.

Q; When did the internment camps close?

A: Some people were in Arizona for about 3 years.

Q: How long did you stay in camp?

A: I wasn't there long. I went there in May and came home by Christmas.

Q: Did you come home after the war was over?

A: Yes, after it was over. At that time we had to register.

Q: Please tell me about it.

A: We had to register before we left, and after we came back.

I went to an office in Burlingame to report.

Q: Did you help Japanese register before you left?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Where did they register?

A: In a building nearby. Wait a minute. American government was thinking about drafting Japanese when they reach draft age, so they checked to see if Japanese would join a service. or not. At that time I helped.

Q: Where was it held at?

A: At the courthouse in Sacramento. I helped Japanese register then. American government may have been thinking about drafting Japanese if there was a war.

Q: Did you register after you came home?

A: Yes, we registered right after we came home.

87-105 Q: As in Tule Lake, were you asked if you would be loyal to America or to Japan?

A: I don't know if there was such thing or not. I was asked by a judge if I would be loyal to America or to Japan. I told him that I would be loyal to America as long as I live in America, but when I return to Japan I would be loyal to Japan. The judge said, "That's all right." I did not say I would be absolutely loyal to Japan when I was living in America, but in my heart I was still loyal to Japan and sent money to Japan through the Heimusha-Kai. I sent much money to Japan. That is why I was interned, but I still think we should have acted that way. I don't think we have done wrong.